

No More Peace Joseph Herrin (03-10-09)

Two days ago the news reported on a story of a pastor being shot and killed in front of a horrified congregation at the Maryville First Baptist Church in Illinois. As I have meditated upon this event I have perceived a very hard message from the Lord. Despite the multitude of objections that always arise from people who have lost their fear of God, having been lulled into a stupor by the constant barrage of words flowing from the mouths of prophets and preachers who present an image of a “mush God” who is all love and mercy and tolerance, I am compelled to share the following word.

The coming days will prove the accuracy of this word. Judgment lies at the very doorstep of the church. Yahweh is full of wrath as He observes the fleshly condition of His people, soiled with all of the filth of the world, living dissipated lives as they spend themselves in pursuit of that which is passing away. Judgment is at hand. It will be swift, and it will be horrible. The people of God will see it with their own eyes, and they will cry out in fear, even as the congregation of FBC Maryville responded when their pastor’s happy message was suddenly interrupted by tragedy.

James said, “Let not many of you be teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment” (James 3:1). The legions of ministers have not taken this admonition seriously, for there is no fear of God before their eyes. Sunday, the church in Maryville witnessed the “stricter judgment” of God before their eyes, yet where are the true prophets of God that will tell them it is so? Instead, a legion of smooth talkers, and peace and prosperity prophets, will assure the people that this was an assault against God, rather than a judgment from God.

What was witnessed Sunday at FBC Maryville will shortly be observed throughout the churches as Yahweh sends forth slayers and they are instructed to begin their judgment with the elders in the house of God.

Ezekiel 9:4-7

And Yahweh said to him, "Go through the midst of the city, even through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst." But to the others He said in my hearing, "Go through the city after him and strike; do not let your eye have pity, and do not spare. "Utterly slay old men, young

men, maidens, little children, and women, but do not touch any man on whom is the mark; and you shall start from My sanctuary." *So they started with the elders who were before the temple.*

The Spirit has been testifying with much emphasis that the horsemen of the apocalypse have been loosed. They are being sent forth to the nations, and judgment must begin with the house of God. Those to whom much has been given, much shall be required.

The church has totally rejected the concept of God as righteous judge, and indignant in His wrath. They are told that such an image is a relic of the Old Testament. The God of the New Testament is all love and kindness, mercy and tolerance. God is kind and there is no severity left in Him, the multitudes are assured by false prophets and self-appointed preachers. Such ones overlook the fact that the story of Ananias and Sapphira is found in the New Testament.

Yahweh struck down this man and his wife in the presence of the believers for they were not walking in truth. They were careless, having no fear of God, but seeing them both fall dead at the feet of Peter, the church learned the peril of treating lightly the holiness and justice of the God they served.

Acts 5:11

And great fear came upon the whole church, and upon all who heard of these things.

I am fully persuaded that what occurred at FBC Maryville Sunday was a judgment and a sign. The church has forgotten the fear of God. They play their games, and pretend to be fully devoted to Yahweh even as the pretenders Ananias and Sapphira. They little consider that they are not just lying to one another, but they are lying to the Spirit who is called Holy.

In an hour when the Spirit is testifying that the sins of the church have reached full measure and judgment will no longer be delayed; in a day when Christ is ready to vomit a lukewarm, materialistic people of ease out of His mouth, the ministers are deceiving the people. They are declaring peace when there is no peace. They are turning the people aside from repentance, and God will hold the shepherds and prophets responsible for not warning the people of the wrath that is at hand. The blood of the people will be upon the watchmen who refused to sound the alarm.

The pastor of FBC Maryville was named Fred Winters. Fred is of Germanic origin, coming from "frid" which means "peace." Fred Winters was in the process of delivering a message titled "Come On, Get Happy!" when he was confronted by a gunman and shot.

I can tell you with a surety that the message coming from the throne of God in this hour is not "Come On, Get Happy!" The Spirit is testifying "Yet even now," declares Yahweh, "*Return to Me with all your heart, and with fasting, weeping, and mourning; And rend your heart and not your garments*" (Joel 2:12).

Those who would be teachers will suffer a stricter judgment, and Yahweh is testifying that the prophets who are proclaiming peace when there is no peace will be judged severely in this hour.

Ezekiel 13:8-10

Therefore, thus says Yahweh God, "*Because you have spoken falsehood and seen a lie, therefore behold, I am against you,*" declares Yahweh God. "*So My hand will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying divinations. They will have no place in the council of My people, nor will they be written down in the register of the house of Israel, nor will they enter the land of Israel, that you may know that I am Yahweh God. It is definitely because they have misled My people by saying, 'Peace!' when there is no peace.*"

When the disciples of Christ heard of a great calamity that occurred in Israel, they inquired of Yahshua about it. He responded in the following manner:

Luke 13:2-5

"Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans, because they suffered this fate? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them, were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

The Spirit is testifying in this hour that the First Baptist Church in Maryville, Illinois was no worse than tens of thousands of other churches across the land in this hour. The vast majority of the people of God have all gone astray. They are all alike trying to serve God and mammon. There are multitudes who are

at ease in Zion. The pulpits are filled with smooth proclaimers of a happy message in an hour when God is full of wrath. The judgment will fall to all His people and they will likewise perish unless they repent quickly.

You may ask, “In what way have the people of God and their ministers transgressed the will of God that they have incurred this great judgment?” They have done so by proclaiming a false gospel that leaves men, women and children in bondage to the flesh. They have done so by superficially healing the sickness of fallen man. They say all is covered by the blood of Christ, but they do not lead men to live a victorious life over sin, Satan and the world. They leave men bound up in selfishness, addicted to pleasure and entertainment and tell them that God is well-pleased with them.

Jeremiah 6:11-14

“I am full of the wrath of Yahweh: I am weary with holding it in. Pour it out on the children in the street, and on the gathering of young men together; For both husband and wife shall be taken, the aged and the very old. And their houses shall be turned over to others, their fields and their wives together; For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land,” declares Yahweh. “For from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is greedy for gain, and *from the prophet even to the priest everyone deals falsely. And they have healed the brokenness of My people superficially, saying, 'Peace, peace,' but there is no peace.*”

Consider the character of the churches today, which are mirrored in this one church in Illinois. The pastor was proclaiming a message titled “Come On, Get Happy” in an hour when God is judging the nations, and great calamity is about to be unleashed. The same weekend that Fred Winters was urging his congregation to “Get Happy,” David Wilkerson shared the following:

AN EARTH-SHATTERING CALAMITY IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. IT IS GOING TO BE SO FRIGHTENING, WE ARE ALL GOING TO TREMBLE - EVEN THE GODLIEST AMONG US.

For ten years I have been warning about a thousand fires coming to New York City. It will engulf the whole megaplex, including areas of New Jersey and Connecticut. Major cities all across America will experience riots and blazing fires—such as we saw in Watts, Los Angeles, years ago.

There will be riots and fires in cities worldwide. There will be

looting—including Times Square, New York City. What we are experiencing now is not a recession, not even a depression. We are under God's wrath. In Psalm 11 it is written,

"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (v. 3).

God is judging the raging sins of America and the nations. He is destroying the secular foundations.

The prophet Jeremiah pleaded with wicked Israel, "God is fashioning a calamity against you and devising a plan against you. Oh, turn back each of you from your evil way, and reform your ways and deeds. But they will say, It's hopeless! For we are going to follow our own plans, and each of us will act according to the stubbornness of his evil heart" (Jeremiah 18:11-12).

[End Excerpt]

Can you think of a greater disparity among preachers and the message being proclaimed? Can you not understand the anger of God as He observes men who are standing in pulpits pretending to be His mouthpiece, and they are lulling the people to sleep in a time when the Spirit is crying forth to the churches to WAKE UP!

Fred Winters had been at this church for 22 years, and he had shepherded them down a path of ease, comfort and complacency. A look at the calendar of events for the church, available at their website reveals the focus of this body of Christians and the leaders that oversee them. The months of March and April reveal the following planned activities to occupy the attention of the saints of God:

High School Lazer Tag Lock-Out

Hey High Schoolers- are you ready to stay up ALL night long?!?! We are going to spend a night full of fun - running, rolling, jumping, climbing, and eating at The Edge in Belleville. Are you up for it?

WIBI Open Act Semi-Final FRIDAY MARCH 13 Featuring FBCM's Very Own Gessica Handegan

We will be hosting the WIBI (91.1 FM) "Opening Act" Semi-Final event on

*Friday, March 13 at 7 p.m. The event will consist of performances by the 8 remaining contestants in this praise and worship competition similar to "American Idol." The audience will be voting on the four finalists that will be moving on in the competition. Our very own Gessica Handegan is a finalist! The evening will also feature a concert by Christian rock band "Fee." Don't miss this opportunity for good, clean, family fun! **Tickets are only \$5/person** and can be purchased by calling 1-800-707-9191 They're going fast so get yours today!*

Timeless Treasures "Spring in Africa" March 20

*Please join us Friday, March 20 at 6 p.m. for our "Spring in Africa" event. We'll enjoy a meal catered by Ponderosa, plus you'll have the chance to taste some genuine African cuisine. The Zambian Men's Acappella Choir will be blessing us through their singing. March 15 is the last day to sign up! Sign up at the long counter in the foyer Sunday! **Cost for this event is \$10/person.***

Dad-Daughter Bowling Date Night March 21!

*Dads and Daughters- Join us March 21 for our Third Annual Dad & Daughter Date Night! We will begin with dinner at Pizza Man in Troy at 4:15 p.m. and then go bowling at Camelot Bowl (Finishing by 9 p.m.). **Cost is \$37.50/couple and \$18.75 for each additional daughter.***

Karate Classes at FBCM

*Kenpo Karate Classes for ages 7-17 will begin March 30. This class will meet once a week on Monday evenings (6 - 7:30 p.m.) for 8 weeks, thru May 18. **Cost is \$80/person.** Trainers from Tracy's Kenpo Karate in Troy, IL will be teaching the class. Sign-up now!*

Church Golf League

If you would like to play golf at Arlington Golf course on Thursdays (3:30 - 5 p.m. start time) each week April 2 - August 27, including a September tournament...

KIDZCamp 2009 Registration Begins Sunday!

Registration begins Sunday for KIDZCamp! Children in Grades 1-5 are invited to join us June 8-12 at Lake Williamson in Carlinville, IL! The energy, excitement and fun is unlimited, but space is limited so check your calendars now! If you are interested in volunteering for Kidz Camp, please fill out a Camp Volunteer Application (available in the Children's area).

MCS "Paradise Island" Dinner Auction March 14

*Maryville Christian School is pleased to present our annual auction fund-raiser, "Paradise Island." Cruise with us on March 14 at 6 p.m. and enjoy delicious food, live entertainment by the Bethel Beach Boys, and fabulous finds at both silent and live auctions! **Tickets are \$20/person** and may be purchased at the "L" counter in the foyer Sundays, until March 8. **To make a donation, please contact...***

Women's Aerobics FREE Guest Preview Week March 17 & 19!

Any interested women who have not previously attended one of our aerobics classes may participate for FREE both Tuesday, March 17 & Thursday, March 19 (6 - 7:15 p.m., Student Worship Area - Rm. 277). This is your no-obligation chance to check out this fun, affordable step class! We sweat to uplifting Christian music and do toning exercises as well. Equipment is provided- just bring a bottle of water and a hand towel! If you like the class, you can sign up for the Spring Session (April 7 - June 11) for only \$1/class!

College Night - Baseball Style!

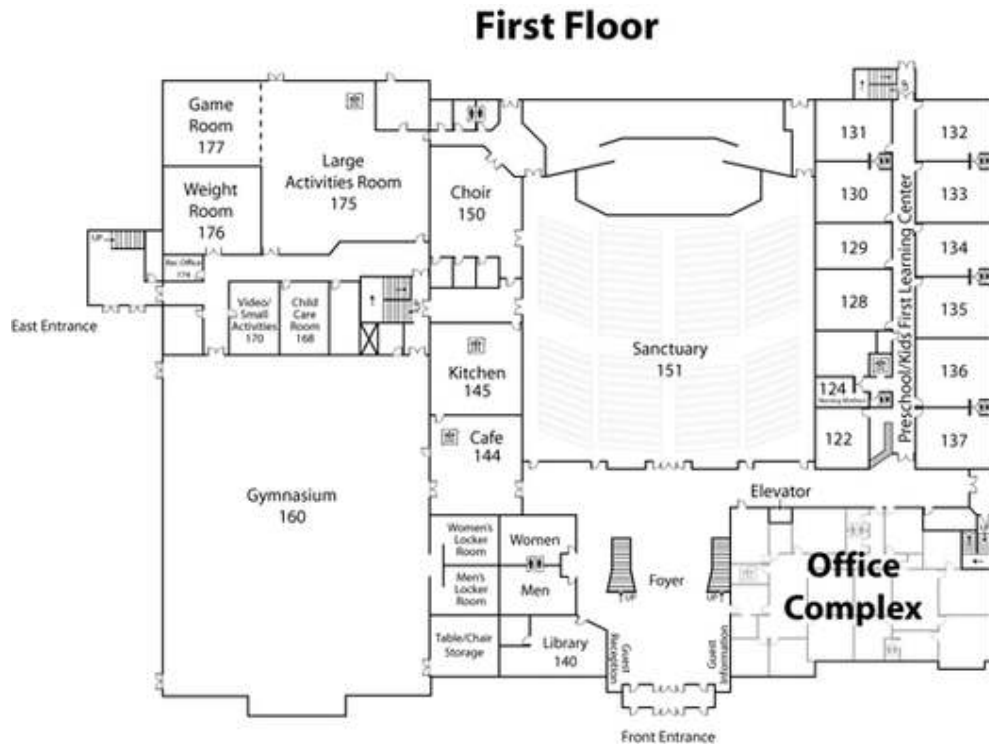
All college-age people are invited to enjoy baseball-style food and a baseball-themed movie at Pastor Tim & Gwen's house Friday, March 27 from 6-9 p.m.

Pastry Cooking Class - Zambia Missions Fundraiser

Help support our Zambia Mission Team and learn how to make four mouth-watering desserts! This class will take place Saturday, March 28 from 4-6:30 p.m. in Room 175. Sign up at the counter in the Foyer

March 8-22 (\$30 minimum donation).

It is not hard to discern a theme to the life of this church as it is directed by the shepherds who oversee it. It is food, fun, excitement, music, entertainment, ease, and pleasure for every age group of the church. A floor plan of the church reveals that such things are central to the very life of the members who attend there.



On the first floor there is a Game Room, a Weight Room, a Large Activities Room, a Kitchen and a Café and men's and women's locker rooms. The second floor also shows a walking/running track inside the building.

Likewise the grounds layout shows a similar theme:



There are four youth soccer fields and a much larger soccer field. There are eight tennis courts. There is a little league softball baseball field and two softball fields. There is a playground and basketball courts.

Soon a people who are at ease will make the confession of Job:

Job 16:12

"I was at ease, but He shattered me, and He has grasped me by the neck and has shaken me to pieces..."

Yahweh knows that a people who are at ease are not transformed from carnal men and women into spiritual. Transformation comes through struggle, by many trials and suffering. Because the people of God have chosen ease they have retained all the flavor of a sinful world. The church is thoroughly a reflection of the evil generation in which it exists. Because the people have not obeyed the Lord, they have neglected to take up their cross and follow Christ, Yahweh will overturn their vessels and He will cast them into troublesome days.

Jeremiah 48:11-12

“Moab has been at ease since his youth; He has also been undisturbed on his lees, neither has he been emptied from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile. Therefore he retains his flavor, and his aroma has not changed. Therefore behold, the days are coming,” declares Yahweh, “when I shall send to him those who tip vessels, and they will tip him over, and they will empty his vessels and shatter his jars.”

For 22 years Fred Winters has led this people until they have become a mature expression of careless ease, bewitched by a message that has proclaimed that God is well pleased with them. They have not been warned of the great anger of Yahweh. They have not been called to repent, to weep and mourn and put on sackcloth. Instead they have been led to pursue endless entertainment and to go from one food festival to another. 22 years is a time found throughout the Scriptures that is associated with God cutting off wicked rulers over his people who have failed to shepherd them in the way they should go.

Jeroboam led the northern tribes of Israel into idolatry. Therefore God judged him. After 22 years God cut him off.

I Kings 14:19-20

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, how he made war and how he reigned, behold, they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. And the time that *Jeroboam reigned was twenty-two years; and he slept with his fathers.*

Later we read of Ahab, the most wicked of all kings, who caused Israel to sin grievously. He too was cut-off after 22 years.

I Kings 16:29-30

Now Ahab the son of Omri became king over Israel in the thirty-eighth year of Asa king of Judah, *and Ahab the son of Omri reigned over Israel in Samaria twenty-two years.* And Ahab the son of Omri did evil in the sight of Yahweh more than all who were before him.

The number 22 is associated over and over with wicked rulers of the people of God, and the judgment that fell upon them. Is not Yahweh incensed that the leaders of His people are once more leading them into idolatry? Is He not justified in judging severely those who turn His people away from repentance and harden them in their spiritual blindness?

Yahweh has sent a multitude of warnings to His people over a period of many years, but their shepherds have lulled them to sleep. The people of God have been distracted with a multitude of activities that are no more than entertainments, feeding the flesh, and keeping the children of God perpetually spiritually immature. They have spent their money on the amusements offered by the church when they should have been caring for the widow and the orphan, the homeless and the stranger.

When the people of God should have been directed to subdue their fleshly passions and desires, and to drive out every enemy in the land of their flesh, they have instead been told that God is satisfied with them to remain encumbered in their slavery to the selfish Adamic nature. When they could have been warned and avoided the judgment to come, the ministers have hidden from their sight the path to peace with God.

Luke 19:41-43

And when He approached, He saw the city and wept over it, saying, *"If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes."*

Romans 14:17-18

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Judgment must begin with the house of God. Sunday a sign was given that this judgment will be severe. If you have been sitting under the preaching of a false messenger of peace; if you have been joined to one of the thousands of houses of ease and prosperity that strive to keep the people entertained, then flee from that place. The Spirit of God has been calling out for many years to Yahweh's people:

Revelation 18:4-5

"Come out of her, my people, that you may not participate in her sins and that you may not receive of her plagues; for her sins have piled up as high as heaven, and God has remembered her iniquities."

The horsemen have been loosed. The judgment will not delay much longer. Now is the time to heed. These are very serious days, and it is a holy God with whom we must deal.

II Corinthians 5:10-11

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...

Let us put off ease and begin to walk in the fear of the Lord.